

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 21-30 are now pending in the application. Minor amendments have been made to the specification and claims to simply overcome the objections to the specification and rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112. The amendments to the claims contained herein are of equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, are not a narrowing amendment. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

SPECIFICATION

The specification stands objected to under 35 U.S.C. § 132(a) because paragraph [0027] introduces new matter into the disclosure. Applicant has amended the specification according to the Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 21 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

With regard to claims 21 and 23, Applicants submit that the specification provides enablement for a sub-plate land region width generally two times the width of the land region of the other sub-plate as shown in Figures 3 and 4 and described in paragraph [0023]. Furthermore, the specification provides enablement for a sub-plate land region width generally three times the width of the land region of the other sub-plate as shown in Figure 5 and described in paragraph [0027]. Applicants submit, therefore, that the

language of claims 21 and 23 is properly enabled since a sub-plate land region width of generally three times the width of the land region of the other sub-plate is greater than two times the width of the land region of the other sub-plate.

Applicants further note that claim 22 has been amended to define the land region of the second sub-plate as having a width generally three times as large as a width of the flow channel. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the above rejections are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103

Claims 1-5, 24-28, and 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Iwai et al. (WO 03-050905 A2). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwai et al. in view of Watkins et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,988,583). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 21-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwai et al. (WO 03/050905). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 29 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwai et al. in view of Hammerschmidt et al. (U.S. 2002/0150809). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants resubmit herewith a copy of the inventor, Steven G. Goebel's, earlier filed Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 in which Mr. Goebel established his conception and reduction to practice of the invention prior to May 30, 2002. Applicants note that this conception and reduction to practice date should be sufficient to pre-date

the June 19, 2003 publication date of Iwai et al (WO 03/050905A2). Therefore, Iwai et al is not a valid prior art reference to the presently pending claims. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the above rejections (each of which relies on the Iwai et al reference) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: Ryan W. Massey
Ryan W. Massey, Reg. No. 38,543

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS:
Cary W. Brooks, Esq.
General Motors Corporation
Legal Staff - Mail Code 482-C23-B21
PO Box 300 - 300 Renaissance Center
Detroit, Michigan 48265-3000
Ph: 313-665-4717
Fax: 313-665-4976

Enclosure: Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131

RWM/srs